

York (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise with grave concerns about the situation in Iraq.

As I indicated during a Special Order organized last week by the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. LARSON, I believe the war in Iraq is the centerpiece of the administration's failed foreign policies. The war in Iraq has proven to be a diversion from what should be our primary foreign policy focus, winning the global war on terror. Our preoccupation with Iraq is decimating our Armed Forces, who now find themselves entrenched in a civil war where they do not belong.

The administration's failure to measure progress in Iraq is matched by its broader foreign policy failures. North Korea and Iran present greater risks to our safety and security than they did when the President identified them as the "axis of evil" in his 2002 State of the Union address.

Today, the situation in Iraq is a tragedy, for America, for our brave troops in uniform, for the future of our Nation, and for the prospect of Middle East peace which fades every day we stay in Iraq and as the violence between Israel and Hezbollah continues.

Although 2006 was supposed to be a "year of significant transition" pursuant to last year's defense authorization law, we are no closer to finishing the year with any measure of positive transition than we were when the year started.

I call my colleagues' attention to a new book by Thomas Ricks, the Washington Post reporter who appeared on Meet the Press on Sunday, to discuss "Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq." As Mr. Ricks explained, the administration's foresight and planning was as poor as its conduct of the post-war period. It is why, 3½ years later, we are still paying the price for such negligence, and why 2006 is not on track to be the year of significant transition that not only had we hoped for, but that we simply must have.

Halfway through the year, these statistics show that we are moving backwards, away from our goal of handing Iraq over to a safe, secure and stable democracy. There were 3,149 civilians deaths in the month of June. That is up from 1,978 civilian deaths in January. For the year, more than 14,000 Iraqi civilians have died. That is an average of 2,400 a month. Another way of looking at that is every 5 weeks, Iraqi civilians die in the number that we lost on September 11.

The overwhelming majority of deaths have occurred in and around Baghdad. If the Iraqi police and army can't provide security, is it any wonder that the Iraqi people have turned to the militias? That is not a measure of progress in any year, but particularly in a year of transition, that would be a turn for the worse.

Every day focusing on combating sectarian violence is another day and an-

other dollar we divert from what should be our priorities, increasing oil production, rebuilding infrastructure, promoting more dialogue between Sunnis and Shia and developing a long-term political solution for a stable, lasting democracy.

The Iraqi leadership isn't showing much progress either, particularly following remarks by Prime Minister al-Malaki and Speaker al-Mashhadani, who both openly condemned Israel in recent weeks.

Combined with the fact that nearly 50 percent of Iraqis support attacking our troops, Iraq is no closer to what the neo-conservatives envisioned as a partner for Israel who would catalyze change and bring about stability in the Middle East.

When the prime minister addresses a joint session of Congress tomorrow morning, I would hope he says the following: First and foremost, that Iraq is indebted to America for the sacrifice of 2,500 of its sons and daughters. Second, that he regrets and retracts his comments about Israel. Third, that he is committed to routing terrorists, sectarian violence and corruption and disarming the sectarian militias. Fourth, that his government will honor the rights of ethnic and minority constituencies by revisiting divisive sections of Iraq's constitution.

Still, Mr. Speaker, it will take much more to accomplish the long-term political goals necessary to restore stability, liberty and democracy, not only in Iraq, but to a region suffering under the strain of so much violence and uncertainty. But we have a long way to go. Reaching our objectives will be further down that path as a result of the administration's failure in the pre-invasion planning and the conduct of the post-war period.

The tragedy of Iraq is perhaps the most solemn and vivid reminder of why a change in leadership is long overdue, and why America deserves a new direction in its foreign policy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

VETO ON STEM CELL RESEARCH PUTS A ROADBLOCK IN THE WAY OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, the European Union agreed today to continue its funding for embryonic stem cell research, research specifically involving the use of embryos that would otherwise be discarded from fertility clinics. Today's agreement among the Euro-

pean nations paves the way for a 55 billion Euro science program designed to improve and move this important research forward. Unfortunately, Europe's progress is in stark contrast to the embarrassing path chartered by the White House.

Mr. Speaker, America has long had a history of leading the world in scientific discovery are. President John Fitzgerald Kennedy made it a national priority to be the first Nation in the world to send a man to the moon. His leadership showed the rest of the world that the United States was the undisputed international leader in scientific progress.

By using his very first presidential veto to continue a misguided ban on stem cell research, President Bush has diminished American scientific standing in the world.

Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago, President Bush said that stem cell research had profound ethical questions. Today, I say that there are no more profound ethical questions than the fate of 100 million American lives, lives that can be saved, lives that will be lost if we don't move this vital research forward.

Last week, we sent to the White House a bipartisan bill that ethically advances stem cell research, a practice supported by 70 percent of Americans. Instead of embracing stem cell research, President Bush chose this moment in time to strike a blow against science and against hope and against saving lives.

The promise of stem cell research is great. One researcher at Harvard Medical School wrote in the New England Journal of Medicine, "The science of human embryonic stem cells is in its infancy," but he cautioned restricting stem cell research would "threaten to starve this field at a critical stage."

Last October, the prestigious, peer-reviewed Journal of Immunology featured a study by four researchers from the University of Minnesota who developed human embryonic stem cells that could destroy cancerous cells.

Mr. Speaker, when we tout the potential for stem cell research to develop future treatment for diseases like cancer, like Parkinson's, opponents of the research will say we are just dreamers, that the proof just isn't there. Well, Mr. Speaker, four cancer survivors live on my street in Lowell, Massachusetts. Shame on anyone who would take a dream away from them.

Nearly 35,000 cases of leukemia were diagnosed last year. In fact, about 30 percent of cancers in children from birth to 14 years of age are leukemia. Today, scientists are using embryonic stem cells to treat leukemia and lymphoma.

We are dreamers, Mr. Speaker, but those dreams are supported by hard science and research. Stem cells have the potential to develop into any kind of body tissue, including blood, brain, or nerve tissue. Scientists believe that this unique ability can lead to even more breakthroughs in the number of illnesses that now are untreatable.

With his rebuff of stem cells, just like ignoring the warnings about global warming, this President has put his head in the sand at America's peril. America needs a new direction that supports science and promotes innovation.

As one of the world's foremost medical science centers, my home State of Massachusetts has played a critical role in the stem cell debate. Not only are our hospitals, research facilities and institutions of higher learning on the cutting edge of conquering disease, they are also major economic drivers keeping us competitive in the global economy. The life sciences industry employs roughly 30,000 people in Massachusetts alone.

The President's rejection of domestic stem cell research does not mean an end to the research elsewhere in the world. This research will go forward. But the President has chosen to leave America behind and hamper our scientific competitiveness.

The President's veto also has put Massachusetts, the world's most powerful engine of innovation and progress, on the sidelines. To put it in perspective, consider that Massachusetts alone has over 250 biotechnology firms, and that is more than all of Western Europe combined.

I believe the choice is clear: We should support stem cell research in Massachusetts and throughout the country. It is our tradition of innovation and science and, most importantly, it will offer hope to millions of Americans suffering from diseases that one day may be cured.

The President has shamefully put a roadblock in the way of scientific progress. The American people deserve better.

ISRAEL: AMERICA'S MAIN ALLY IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to address the House for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as editorial pages are abuse with discussion about the tragic and sad events in the Middle East, and some people at coffee shops and at street corners around our country are asking some very basic questions about the conflict in that region and why it has reached the place that it has.

I have heard some on this floor raise what are really foundational questions to make it possible to understand the conflict and the challenge facing Israel in their battle against Hamas on one front, Hezbollah on the other front, and their two nation sponsors, Iran and Syria.

One question that frequently gets asked is how come we can't just let diplomacy take hold? And it is true. Whenever there are missiles flying,

whenever there are guns ablaze, it is, by very definition, a failure of diplomacy. And it has never been the first choice of either the United States or Israel in that part of the world to choose violence.

If you look through the entire scope of the Israeli lifespan, their entire existence has been marked with them extending their hand and saying yes to proposed diplomatic solutions to the conflict there, and their Arab nations saying no.

In 1947, even before the nation was born, there was the famous partition plan that would have made Israel a fraction of what it is today, surrounded by enemy Arab countries. It was the Arabs that said no, not the Israelis.

Since then, we have had the Oslo Accord, where the Israelis acknowledged the PLO as a partner for peace and were obviously burned; the Wye River Accord; the Camp David Accord with Egypt, which thankfully, still stands today; Camp David II, which was a concession of virtually everything that the Palestinians asked for in exchange for peace, and that was met with violence.

We also should note that when they left Gaza on their southern border, left the parts to the Palestinians, that is the very spot that is now being used to launch missiles, Katusha rockets by the dozens, against their citizens.

When they left Lebanon after occupying it because so many missiles were flying from Lebanon into their northern border, they left to come into compliance with the U.N. resolution and to set up universally and internationally accepted border that now Hezbollah has breached in Lebanon.

So it is true diplomacy is the better option. But in every single circumstance where diplomacy was pursued by the Israelis, with the help of the United States, it has been her terrorist neighbors, her Arab neighbors, who have said diplomacy is not what we want; we want Israel not to exist. And that, by the way, still today is what Hamas has made their creed, Hezbollah has made their mission, supported by Syria and Iran.

We have also heard a couple of times something that I wholeheartedly agree with, that there are many in Lebanon who are completely innocent in this. There are.

Frankly, my good friend, Mr. LAHOOD, mentioned this during the debate on the floor on the resolution supporting Israel. It is true there is no group more innocent and more persecuted in that part of the world than the Lebanese Christians, who have been persecuted by their fellow Lebanese. There are many people in Lebanon who just want to live and be free, but they have been overrun by Syria and then by Hezbollah.

But you are not an innocent victim of this if you go to bed at night with a Hezbollah rocket tucked under your bed. You are not an innocent victim if you went out and voted for Hezbollah to make them part of your govern-

ment. You are not an innocent victim when you make Hezbollah part of the ministry in Lebanon. You cannot lay down with dogs and expect not to get up with fleas.

The government of Lebanon has chosen to make partnership with Hezbollah, so when Hezbollah crossed an international border and takes prisoners, when they lob missiles into Haifa, the Lebanese government, unfortunately, has to decide which side they are on, and up to now they have said they are on the side of Hezbollah.

The final thing I have heard is, from time to time, some, and it is even supporters of Israel, say, you know what, this is a difficult time since September 11. Maybe our true concern should not be about what goes on in Israel. Maybe it should be just worrying about the United States and our interests.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, when the United States goes out and fights against terrorism around the world, arguably they have one ally. It is not our feckless friends in Europe. It is not the French. It is not even the British. Our only ally, who every single day is fighting terrorism, is Israel. When they fight against Hezbollah, they are fighting against the organization that was the number one terrorist organization killing Americans before September 11.

That has to be part of our understanding. When Israel's soldiers go and fight and die against terrorists, they are fighting a war for all of us.

So as we watch the newspapers and try to understand what is going on, we have got to understand diplomacy was tried by the Israelis, over and over and over again, and it will be tried again. We have got to understand that those in Lebanon, there are some innocent victims, but there are many people guilty as well. And we have to understand that when Israel fights for its freedom, it fights on behalf of the United States as well.

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SECTARIAN BREAK-UP OF IRAQ IS INEVITABLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow this House will be treated to a real interesting historical event. The Prime Minister of Iraq will be here. His article today in the Wall Street Journal says: "Iraq is a sovereign nation."

He goes on to talk about one province of Iraq that has some stability and makes that appear that that is the Iraq that he is here to represent. If one reads the European newspapers, the Independent, and I will enter this into the RECORD, the Independent from Great Britain says, and the title of this article is, "Sectarian break-up of Iraq is now inevitable admit officials."

They talk about the fact that Mr. Maliki yesterday met with Tony Blair